



Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan

August 2024 to August 2027



Published by the Murray–Darling Basin Authority
MDBA publication no: 19/24
ISBN (online): 978-1-922699-65-7



GPO Box 1801, Canberra ACT 2601

engagement@mdba.gov.au



1800 230 067



mdba.gov.au

© Murray–Darling Basin Authority 2024

Ownership of intellectual property rights



With the exception of the Commonwealth Coat of Arms, the MDBA logo, trademarks and any exempt photographs and graphics (these are identified), this publication is provided under a *Creative Commons Attribution 4.0* licence. (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>)

The Australian Government acting through the Murray–Darling Basin Authority has exercised due care and skill in preparing and compiling the information and data in this publication. Notwithstanding, the Murray–Darling Basin Authority, its employees and advisers disclaim all liability, including liability for negligence and for any loss, damage, injury, expense or cost incurred by any person as a result of accessing, using or relying upon any of the information or data in this publication to the maximum extent permitted by law.

The Murray–Darling Basin Authority's preference is that you attribute this publication (and any Murray–Darling Basin Authority material sourced from it) using the following wording within your work:

Cataloguing data

Title: Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan, Murray–Darling Basin Authority Canberra, 2024. CC BY 4.0

Accessibility

The Murray–Darling Basin Authority makes its documents and information available in accessible formats. On some occasions the highly technical nature of the document means that we cannot make some sections fully accessible. If you encounter accessibility problems or the document is in a format that you cannot access, please contact us.

Acknowledgement of the Traditional Owners of the Murray–Darling Basin

The Murray–Darling Basin Authority pays respect to the Traditional Owners and their Nations of the Murray–Darling Basin. We acknowledge their deep Cultural, social, environmental, spiritual and economic connection to their lands and waters.

The guidance and support received from the Murray Lower Darling Rivers Indigenous Nations and our many Traditional Owner friends and colleagues is very much valued and appreciated.

Aboriginal people should be aware that this publication may contain images, names or quotations of deceased persons.



Contents

Acknowledgement	1
Our Artwork	1
About the Artist.....	2
Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan	2
Our Vision for Reconciliation.....	2
Chief Executive’s foreword	4
Reconciliation Australia foreword.....	6
Indigenous Champion foreword	7
Our Agency	8
Our RAP	9
RAP Governance.....	10
Executive support.....	11
Reconciliation Action Plan Committee.....	11
Employee networks.....	11
Our Reconciliation Journey 2014 to 2024	12
Our achievements	13
The Garrandarang Library	14
Goodooga Central School.....	14
Case Study 1: Affirmative Measures 2023 Recruitment	15
Case Study 2: Cultural Landscape Plan of Management of Lake Victoria (Tar-Ru).....	16
Our First Nations Employee Network	16
Closing the Gap	17
Our Stretch priorities.....	18
Action Area: Relationships	19
Action Area: Respect.....	24
Action Area: Opportunities	29
Action Area: Governance	33



Acknowledgement

The Murray–Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) acknowledges and offers its respect to the Traditional Owners and their Nations of the Murray–Darling Basin. The contributions of earlier generations, including the Elders, who have fought for their rights in natural resource management are also valued and respected.

The MDBA recognises and acknowledges that the Traditional Owners and their Nations in the Murray–Darling Basin have a deep cultural, social, environmental, spiritual, and economic connection to their lands and waters. The MDBA understands the need for recognition of Traditional Owner knowledge and cultural values in natural resource management associated with the Basin.

Our Artwork

We are proud to share our Reconciliation Action Plan artwork – Rivers, for Generations.

Rivers, for Generations represents all the rivers in our land and how they connect us to our ancestor's through the passage of time. That connection cleanses our spirit as we use the fresh water to sate our thirst and clean our skin just like the generations before us and the generations who will follow us after we are gone. Our presence being a ripple in the water.

I really wanted 'Rivers, for Generations' to incorporate a lot of the already established visual identity of the Murray Darling Basin Authority. We have the representation of the river as the focal point but there is also a lot of the curved, intersecting and parallel lines throughout the rest of the artwork. I also added a few gradient elements in keeping with the original design guide and used variations of the pebble shape.

– Amy Kilby, Wiradjuri woman, Digital Artist and Graphic Designer

At MDBA our purpose is Rivers, for Generations, this is at the core of what we do. It is what motivates us every day and puts our knowledge, skill and belief at the centre of one of the most complex and important challenges facing Australia; how to keep the Murray Darling Basin healthy and flourishing for all. To be able to provide rivers, for generations.

Our purpose calls us forward to leverage our experience and expertise in river operations, ecology, hydrology, the environment, community engagement, engineering, water policy and regulation towards more powerful and sustainable solutions, relationships, mindsets and outcomes.

About the Artist

Amy Kilby comes from a family of Aboriginal artists and has been a graphic designer for the past decade, specialising in the development of culturally engaging artwork, designs and content.

I have always had a passion for art in general and as a child loved to paint and draw. But as I have grown and we've evolved into the digital age graphic design and the digitalisation of traditional paintings and art has quickly become my new passion!



Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan

Our Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) illustrates our formal commitment to reconciliation and how we can further participate in Australia's journey towards reconciliation.


It shows how we will work closely with First Nations peoples, communities and organisations to:

- Continue to increase First Nations representation in our workforce
- Increase cultural knowledge of all staff
- Celebrate First Nations cultures and significant events
- View reconciliation as business as usual, embedding in our day-to-day work.

Our Vision for Reconciliation

Our vision for reconciliation is one where all staff understand the significance of sharing history and of moving forward with concrete actions to improve the lives of First Nations peoples. We understand that every member of the agency is on their own individual journey and our RAP encourages, promotes and enables different pathways to reconciliation. In advocating cultural learning, we also accept that reconciliation has different meanings for First Nations peoples and commit to engaging in Truth Telling and Truth Seeking with First Nations peoples on their histories, lived experiences and aspirations.

We recognise that water is an integral part of First Nations' culture. As a water agency, we work together with First Nations to achieve healthy rivers by incorporating First Nations' science, expertise, knowledge, and values in water management. Our view is that authority and responsibility regarding First Nations cultures rests with First Nations Peoples. We will work with First Nations to advance the sustainability, productivity, wellbeing, equity and resilience of the Murray–Darling Basin and its communities. We will focus on achieving practical outcomes by working with First Nations people using the mechanisms available to us.



We recognise the deep connection that First Nations peoples have with land, surface water and groundwater resources. We are committed to supporting the establishment of dedicated cultural flows through water entitlements that are legally owned and managed by First Nations peoples. We also acknowledge cultural flows are important for the spiritual, cultural, environmental, social and economic conditions of First Nations peoples.

In our work, we will:

- Recognise that the authority and responsibility with respect to First Nations cultures rests with First Nations peoples.
- Engage and partner with First Nations peoples through a process of free, prior, and informed consent. This means that First Nations peoples have knowledge and understanding of relevant MDBA programs and objectives to ensure they are aware of the consequences and outcomes, which may result from their contribution and any consent with regards to cultural knowledge, values, and perspectives.
- Acknowledge the principle of Caring for Country. Care and management of water and aquatic environments cannot be separated from care and management of land, people, and culture. A holistic landscape approach is required supported by broader natural resource management.
- Recognise that natural resource management programs have a role in delivering cultural, social, economic, and environmental outcomes that are equitable and appropriate to all First Nations peoples.
- Ensure that partnerships between First Nations peoples and the MDBA are based on respect, honesty, and capacity to participate equally, with shared responsibility and clearly defined accountability and authority. The MDBA appreciates that partnerships need to be adequately resourced.
- Work with First Nations people, communities and organisations in a way that supports initiatives that enable practical and beneficial outcomes as agreed by both parties.
- Be flexible in our approach and conscious of First Nations' capacity to participate, as well as being adaptive to the external policy settings such as whole of government initiatives including the National Water Initiative and Closing the Gap.

Chief Executive's foreword



Andrew McConville
Chief Executive
Murray–Darling Basin Authority

The Murray–Darling Basin has a long and rich history. It has been an important source of food and water for many thousands of years and is home to more than 2.3 million people.

First Nations people have always held a unique connection to the Basin, a deep cultural and spiritual bond that remains today.

As an organisation, the Murray–Darling Basin Authority was established as an independent government agency to manage the Basin's water resources in the national interest. Our priority has been the well-being and resilience of the Basin, where rivers function through the extremes of Australia's changing climate, and whose communities are ready for the future.

We are strongly committed to reconciliation and building on the work of the original custodians of the Basin.

I am proud to present the MDBA's Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2024 to 2027, as our formal commitment to reconciliation. Our RAP sets out how we will continue contributing to the broader reconciliation journey of all of Australia.


This RAP builds on the important progress we have made since the launch of our first RAP in 2015. Since then, we have achieved some encouraging outcomes, including:

- Increasing representation of First Nations staff
- Creating the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Procurement Strategy 2021 to 2024
- Establishing our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employee Network.

While we are proud of these achievements we recognise more still can, and should be done, and our Stretch RAP will be our guide.

Our RAP to 2027 demonstrates how we will work with First Nations peoples, communities, and organisations to:

- Deliver improved employment initiatives
- Increase our cultural competency through cultural learning programs
- Celebrate First Nations people at important events
- Embed reconciliation in all our work through divisional reconciliation plans.



Our RAP is also our contribution to the Australian Government’s Closing the Gap and Uluru Statement priorities.

Through collective effort, collaboration, and creativity we have developed this Stretch RAP 2024 to 2027. My sincerest thanks to our First Nations colleagues and all staff across the MDBA who had a hand in its development.

We have an ambitious plan ahead of us and it is only by looking back that we can look forward to the future. A future where we build on the care and commitment of Basin’s custodians thousands of years before us so there are rivers for generations to come.

I look forward to walking alongside you in our reconciliation journey.

Andrew McConville

Chief Executive
Murray–Darling Basin Authority
August 2024



Reconciliation Australia foreword

On behalf of Reconciliation Australia, I congratulate the Murray–Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) on its formal commitment to reconciliation, as it implements its first Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), its third RAP overall. The RAP program provides organisations with a framework to contribute to the reconciliation movement through the pillars *relationships, respect* and *opportunities*.

The MDBA works to improve the health and sustainability of the Murray–Darling Basin – the lifeblood of many distinct Aboriginal peoples and Nations across Eastern Australia who have stewarded its rivers and tributaries for millennia and for whom its waterways are inseparable from culture.

Despite this, since colonisation, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have largely been excluded from and disregarded in Australia’s water management. Consequently, the MDBA has the duty and potential to contribute to rectifying this injustice by ensuring that First Nations voices and practices are prioritised in creating a healthier Basin.

Reflecting on its previous RAPs, the MDBA has demonstrated progress towards this aim, namely in incorporating First Nations perspectives into its leadership and decision-making processes. Notably, the Authority has ensured Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation in its leadership, including a permanent First Nations position on its Board and 2 permanent positions on its Basin Community Committee. MDBA’s consideration of who is contributing to its governance and direction is pivotal in ensuring that First Nations perspectives are given their due weight in its decision-making.

Building on this, the MDBA is looking in its first Stretch RAP to strengthen its commitment to respectfully working with the First Nations communities impacted by its operations. Focussing on the strategies and policies that guide its relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, the Authority is committed to reviewing, updating, and implementing its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander engagement plan.

The MDBA also plans to develop an Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property Policy to affirm its approach to protecting cultural heritage and intellectual property rights. These formalised processes, alongside its partnerships with First Nations communities, will be integral to making sure the Authority continues to transparently and thoughtfully prioritise Traditional Custodians’ involvement in the health and sustainability of the Basin.

On behalf of Reconciliation Australia, I commend the Murray–Darling Basin Authority on this Stretch RAP and look forward to following its ongoing reconciliation journey.

Karen Mundine

Chief Executive Officer
Reconciliation Australia

Indigenous Champion foreword



Jack Knowles

Indigenous Champion
General Manager, First Nations
Murray–Darling Basin Authority

Reconciliation is a journey to better understanding the depth and value of our history as Australians. The Murray–Darling Basin Authority has a strong commitment to reconciliation, and I am proud to be a part of our Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2024–2027 which will deepen our Reconciliation journey for the agency and our staff. Our RAP encourages all staff to build their knowledge of First Nations peoples, histories and experiences, through a variety of deliverables, and I look forward to continuing to work together, to achieve our RAP ambition.

We are all on our own journey when it comes to reconciliation, both as individuals and as organisations. At the MDBA, this is our starting point for all undertakings to ensure a fair and equitable future for First Nations people. Our Stretch RAP is about establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationships with First Nations peoples and playing our part to improve outcomes for First Nations people.

I would like to acknowledge the MDBA Strengthening Connections Employee Network for their ambition and abilities in developing the actions in our RAP and encouraging us to incorporate these into our day-to-day work.

Reconciliation is not a just a word, it is an action. As an organisation, we are proud of our achievements so far in our reconciliation journey, and we recognise that there is still more we can and should do.

I look forward to continuing this journey with our organisation and I am excited for the possibilities ahead.

Jack Knowles

General Manager, First Nations
Murray–Darling Basin Authority
August 2024



Our Agency

The Murray–Darling Basin Authority works together with First Nations peoples to achieve healthy rivers by incorporating First Nations’ science, expertise, knowledge, and values in water management.

The Murray–Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) will work with First Nations peoples to advance the sustainability, productivity, wellbeing, equity and resilience of the Murray–Darling Basin and its communities. The MDBA focuses on achieving practical outcomes, working with First Nations people using the mechanisms available to the MDBA. The MDBA provides cultural learning opportunities for all staff and promotes First Nations recruitment and procurement.

We are an independent statutory authority established by the *Water Act 2007* (Cth) to improve the health and sustainability of the Murray–Darling Basin through integrated reform and management of water and other natural resources for the long-term benefit of the Australian community.

We work closely with First Nations, other Australian Government agencies, Basin State governments, local governments, regional bodies, industry groups, landholders, environmental organisations, research organisations, scientists and Basin communities, and the broader Australian community.

Our staff are located across 7 locations:

- Kurna Country | Adelaide
- Ngunnawal Country | Canberra
- Bigambul Country | Goondiwindi
- Wiradjuri Country | Griffith
- Latji Latji Country | Mildura
- Ngarrindjeri Country | Murray Bridge
- Dhudhuroa Country | Wodonga.


In January 2024, we employ 423 staff, of which 4% identify as First Nations.

Our network of Regional Engagement Officers throughout the Basin connects us with key local stakeholders and support coordination and implementation of water management at the local level. Our work is regionally focused on areas within the Murray–Darling Basin (MDB/the Basin), but these are managed in accordance with national level interest.

There is also international interest in our work from natural resource managers. Our stakeholders are diverse groups or individuals who have a keen interest in the development and implementation of the Basin Plan and the activities of the MDBA.

There are more than 50 First Nations across the Basin. Within these Nations only select Traditional Owners have the Cultural Authority to speak for Country. It is important that, when engaging with First Nations peoples, we do so in the right way.

We are open to, and will engage with, First Nations peoples and First Nations bodies in an equitable way, and in a manner that they wish to engage with the MDBA.



We have a permanent First Nations position on the MDBA Authority, and in 2024 a second First Nations member will be appointed. In 2021, Mr Rene Woods, Nari Nari man, commenced as the inaugural First Nations Board member of the MDBA, following a Ministerial announcement of a permanent First Nations position on the Authority.

The Basin Community Committee (BCC) and its First Nations subcommittee is also an important conduit for community advice on First Nations issues across the MDB (Murray Darling Basin). The BCC provides a community perspective to the Authority on a wide range of water resource, environmental, cultural and socioeconomic matters. As per section 202 of the Water Act, 2 of its members must be First Nations people with expertise in First Nations matters relevant to the Basin's water resources. Alice Williams from the Macquarie–Castlereagh region, Feli McHughes, from the Barwon–Darling region, and Mike Gilby, from the Sunraysia region, are First Nations people currently on the BCC. The BCC's role and operating arrangements are detailed in s202 of the Water Act.

We are also supported by the Advisory Committee on Social, Economic and Environmental Sciences (ACSEES), a source of independent, strategic advice. The ACSEES reviews and advises on the science that informs Basin Plan implementation and the broader scientific context of the MDBA's work, including adaptation to future climates, environmental management, and the monitoring and evaluation of Basin health and Basin Plan outcomes. Professor Anne Poelina, a Nyikina Warrwa woman from the Kimberly region of Western Australia, is a current member.

The MDBA supports a First Nations Employee Network. Previously called the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employer Network (ATSIEN). The Network's purpose is to create a supportive environment for members to build relationships through support, guidance, mentoring and connection. It provides a safe space to allow attitudes and aspirations of our First Nations staff to be acknowledged and to share advice and guidance on a variety of issues. Our First Nations staff also attend the First Nations staff network facilitated by our Portfolio department.

The network advances the MDBA's efforts to create a culturally safe and welcoming workplace for all staff and has made meaningful contributions to our day-to-day work by providing cultural advice on policies and programs. The RAP Working Group will continue to seek the assistance of the First Nations Employee Network in supporting the MDBA's reconciliation agenda and meeting the deliverables outlined in this Stretch RAP 2024–27.

Our RAP

Excited to take the next step in our reconciliation journey, it is with great pride that we deliver our Stretch RAP 2024–27. We have had success with our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plans and welcome the opportunity to implement our first Stretch RAP.

We pride ourselves on our institutional integrity and of where we are as an organisation but acknowledge there is always more we can do. Our hope is to continue to enhance our relationship with our First Nations stakeholders and harness their knowledge of the Basin lands and waters in recognition of their thousands of years of land stewardship. In so doing, we seek to further engage in our journey towards unity and ensuring equality and equity for all Australians.

Our RAP has been developed with the support and guidance of employees and senior management across the entire organisation, with a holistic, collaborative approach to reconciliation and the journey we will take to achieve this.

We have incorporated learnings from our previous RAP, celebrating our successes and eager to stretch ourselves to accomplish even more.

RAP Governance

Given the scope of deliverables outlined in this RAP, we have revised our governance structure to enable effective and efficient management of each action.

Our revised governance structure reflects our growth in this space, the comprehensiveness of commitments across the organisation and our commitment to reconciliation.

This structure gives senior leaders ownership and supervision of our RAP progress. They will also provide guidance for the working groups.

Distinct working groups have been designed to oversee RAP progress and ensure we meet our deliverables.

We strongly encourage First Nations representation across the entire governance structure.



Figure 1 MDBA RAP Governance Structure

The structure can be broken down into 3 tiers:

1. A RAP Implementation Committee comprising First Nations and senior management representation across the organisation who are responsible for the implementation of the RAP initiatives.
2. A Strengthening Connections Employee Network for staff that want to continue to increase their knowledge and capability in relation to First Nations peoples.
3. First Nations Staff Network for general networking, input and consultation on MDBA policies and how they specifically impact First Nations, pay and conditions issues impacting First Nations people and other topics of interest.



Executive support

MDBA's Senior Executive team plays an active role in encouraging staff participation in inclusion events and promoting cultural learning. Since the commencement of our second RAP great progress has been made in this space and more staff are actively participating in cultural learning opportunities.

Keynote events where we hear directly from First Nations leaders continue to be well attended.

Our Indigenous Champion is the General Manager, First Nations

Progress made during our second RAP includes a broad range of cultural learning events which are focused on National Reconciliation Week and National Aborigines' and Islanders' Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) week including keynote speakers, on Country tours, craft and cooking events, ATSIEN-led 'Question and Answer' sessions and book clubs that explore First Nations histories and cultures. This RAP continues the focus on staff cultural learning and corporate processes but also provides external leadership with collaborative partnerships with First Nations people on environmental and cultural watering across the Basin.

Reconciliation Action Plan Committee

The MDBA RAP Committee (the RAP Committee) is a strategic and coordinating group accountable for implementing the MDBA Stretch RAP to achieve the required outcomes. It is a decision-making body that includes MDBA executives who are involved in First Nations work at the MDBA. The RAP Committee is supported by 2 employee networks that each play a part in building relationships with First Nations peoples and implementing elements of the RAP.

Our RAP Committee membership includes:

- Chair
 - Indigenous Champion
- Co-Chair
 - Chief People Officer
- First Nations Staff Representatives
- Strengthening Connections Employee Network staff representatives
- People and Culture Branch Representatives
- External Advisor
- Secretariat

Employee networks

Our employee network groups aim to raise and strengthen cultural awareness and create a feeling of belonging through connections across the business. The employee networks bring employees together who wish to be on a shared journey aligned to our Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2023 to 2026, to create opportunities for sharing stories, and learning and professional development in a supportive environment.



Network groups that support our RAP are:

- The Strengthening Connections Employee Network focuses on bringing together MDBA employees to drive, support and enhance reconciliation across the organisation. Their goal is to engage with staff across the MDBA to build meaningful and respectful relationships with First Nations peoples, through a better understanding and respect for First Nations peoples' culture, history and connection with water. The Strengthening Connections Employee Network also helps to connect First Nations employees with First Nations allies at the MDBA.
- The First Nations Employee Network is open to all MDBA staff who identify as First Nations. The role of this network is to create connections between our First Nations staff by providing a safe place to have meaningful conversations and create a sense of belonging.

Our Reconciliation Journey 2014 to 2024

Our reconciliation journey began a decade ago in 2014, when we began drafting our first RAP. We launched our first Innovate RAP in 2015 and since then, our reconciliation journey has helped us grow, both as individuals on our own journeys and as an agency. We are proud of our history working closely with First Nations peoples across Australia and we have been a leader in many areas:


- The Living Murray Indigenous Partnerships program
- Lake Victoria (Tar-Ru) Cultural Heritage program
- First Nations Environmental Water Guidance Project

The MDBA remains fully committed to progressing the aspirations of First Nations people in water management and our organisational ambition to include First Nations perspectives in decision making, delivering cultural water.

The MDBA has travelled far in its efforts to achieve reconciliation, and we are committed to this ongoing journey through all aspects of our business. Our RAP is a key commitment of the agency, with external reporting requirements and actions across multiple areas. It was driven by the voluntary Strengthening Connections Employee Network (SCEN). From 2019–21, we implemented our second RAP and achieved 62 actions over the 3 years.

We will continue to implement these actions and maintain its importance as a cornerstone of the MDBA Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2023–2026.

Our Innovate RAP provided us with many learning opportunities and we look forward to building on our accomplishments in our Stretch RAP.



Key learnings from our experience include:

- recognising that all staff are at varying stages of their reconciliation journey and giving staff the opportunity to take the journey from wherever they are
- not assuming staff are at the same place in their journey
- recognising that to achieve our Stretch RAP goals we each have a responsibility to contribute better understanding of the challenges to recruiting and retaining First Nations staff in an incredibly competitive public sector environment. We will continue to develop strategies to support employment, retention and career development goals of First Nations People
- maintaining a culturally safe workplace is critical for us to progress our reconciliation journey.

Our achievements

We established a strong First Nations Employee Network (previously referred to as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employees' Network - ATSIEN). The network provides peer support, networking and professional development opportunities for First Nations employees.

In addition to providing support to First Nations staff, the Network assisted the Strengthening Connections Employee Network (SCEN) in delivering on the objectives of the MDBA Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2019–21.


Meetings are held to:

- discuss challenges members may be facing
- discuss sensitive issues that arise from Strengthening Connections matters
- provide ideas, suggestions and recommendations for improvements on First Nations matters
- support and encourage each other
- share information and opportunities.

To overcome identified barriers for First Nations employees the MDBA during this RAP, we also delivered on key policy objectives Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy 2020–23. These objectives now form part of the MDBA Diversity and Inclusion strategy 2023–2026 and include:

- Cultural capability
- Mentoring, coaching
- Providing opportunity to participate in APSC training such as APS job applications and interviews and, working effectively at the APS level.

The MDBA developed the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Procurement Strategy 2021–24 with the goals of increasing opportunities and developing commercial relationships with First Nations peoples. It also supports the economic capacity of First Nations businesses in areas such as hospitality, construction, labour hire, graphic design, office supplies and printing, sustainability and IT.



The MDBA is committed to providing opportunities for First Nations peoples in its business and work with water management, consistent with the Commonwealth Indigenous Procurement Policy.

We also included the commitment in our Innovate RAP 2019–21 to award 6% of the value of MDBA contracts to First Nations enterprises each financial year.

We have conducted many affirmative measures programs, most notably in our Basin Plan Review where we offered multiple roles across a variety of capability areas required to deliver our business.

We have offered our staff cultural immersion experiences including on-Country visits, Jawun Program secondments and participation in NAIDOC and National Reconciliation Week events. These experiences allowed staff to connect with First Nations culture at a deeper level and recognise the values and diversity of traditional knowledge. Staff who participated in these opportunities brought their learnings back to the workplace and were able to implement their learnings to enhance their work results.

We also commenced the implementation of Footprints, a cultural learning and awareness journey created by the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) and made freely available to the MDBA, providing our staff with another opportunity to enhance their cultural learning and progress their individual reconciliation journey.

The Garrandarang Library

In the Wiradjuri language, the word Garrandarang means 'book'. The MDBA created the Garrandarang Library to provide MDBA staff and their families with access to a range of First Nations books and resources. By broadening our knowledge and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and culture, we hope to further support our staff on their reconciliation journey.


Staff are encouraged to become involved in the library by participating in the Library Committee, suggesting new books, donating books and to make a gold coin donation for each library book borrowed. All donations are provided to the Indigenous Goodooga Central School, MDBA's nominated charity partner.

Goodooga Central School

Goodooga is a town in New South Wales located on the eastern bank of the Bokhara River in the Brewarrina Shire. Its closest neighbour is Lightning Ridge. The town lies 20 kilometres south of the Queensland border.

Goodooga Central School was identified as our National Reconciliation Week fundraising partner in the 2019–2021 Reconciliation Action Plan with the agency raising funds for the school since the commencement of this RAP.

Due to the school's remote location, there are limited employment opportunities for school leavers. To overcome this obstacle the school has established a strong relationship with TAFE and is a member of the Northern Borders Senior Access program which provides a broad curriculum



for students undertaking studies in year 11 and 12 by linking with staff from 3 other schools via teleconferencing and the internet.

Emphasis is placed upon student well-being in meeting the needs of all students through individual and group practices that concentrate on the development of literacy and numeracy skills.

The goal of Goodooga Central School is to provide quality education in a safe and stimulating learning environment and in so doing encourage students to be respectful and responsible learners.

Since our fundraising partnership began in 2019, we have been able to donate every year, with some of the funds going towards their cultural garden. Some of our staff have also had the joy of visiting the school students and providing educational talks on water.

Case Study 1: Affirmative Measures 2023 Recruitment

The MDBA is equally committed to achieving reconciliation between First Nations peoples and the wider Australian community by supporting the recruitment, retention and career development of our First Nations employees. Our objective is to improve employment outcomes by increasing First Nations recruitment, retention and professional development.

We understand the importance of diversity and inclusion and have completed 2 Affirmative Measure recruitment rounds across various APS work levels, one as part of delivering our commitment to review the Basin Plan. Our commitment to diversity and inclusion is also reflected in our Recruitment and Selection Policy 2021–24 and in our (previous) Innovate RAP.

Our Affirmative Measures Program in 2023 demonstrated our commitment to reconciliation, and the importance of inclusion. The program was managed by our People and Culture Branch, part of the Business Services Division.


In addition, we recently undertook 2 Affirmative Measure recruitment rounds for the following roles:

- First Nations Knowledge and Engagement (multiple roles)
- Director, First Nations Relationships.

The First Nations Knowledge and Engagement process was a bulk round advertised for the Basin Plan Review. We have multiple positions across several capabilities. Roles advertised varied in classifications to attract a wider range of skillsets, allowing a higher number of candidates to apply.

Merit pools have been created for future vacancies – to further enhance our First Nations peoples' representation.

Considerable time and effort were invested in establishing the recruitment process, where we were able to establish trust and build relationships, provide a safe and supportive path for First Nations candidates to showcase their skills and capabilities and place importance on inclusivity.



We will continue using this recruitment method into the future and share our knowledge and experiences freely with other agencies.

Case Study 2: Cultural Landscape Plan of Management of Lake Victoria (Tar-Ru)

Lake Victoria (Tar-Ru) is a significant place, both spiritually and culturally for First Nations people particularly the Barkindji and Maraura people.

There is extensive evidence of First Nations occupancy at Lake Victoria spanning at least 28,000 years including burials, middens, fireplaces, scarred trees and stone artefacts.

Lake Victoria (Tar-Ru) is also a key water storage site in the River Murray System managed by the Murray–Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) on behalf of the Commonwealth Government and the Governments of South Australia (SA), New South Wales (NSW) and Victoria (VIC).

The key objective for management of the cultural landscape at Lake Victoria is to minimise impacts on First Nations Cultural Heritage, which is undertaken by the conservation and maintenance of existing and emerging Cultural Heritage, with a strategy for lake operations, and protection and, where possible, enhancement of native vegetation.

The MDBA has recently updated our Cultural Landscape Plan of Management (CLPoM), in collaboration with Elders, independent experts, and representatives from government agencies.


The CLPoM captures how the MDBA will comply with the Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permit (AHIP) conditions, but also enables a format to capture opportunities, ideas and aspirations of the traditional owners, and areas where we can stretch ourselves to do better.

The ongoing work of preserving the cultural and natural heritage values of Lake Victoria since 1998 represents the collaborative and dedicated efforts of the Barkindji–Maraura Elders Council (BMEC), the Lake Victoria Advisory Committee (LVAC), South Australian Water Corporation (SA Water), NSW Department of Planning, and Environment – Water (NSW DPE Water), and Murray–Darling Basin Authority (MDBA).

Over 20 years have passed since the first CLPoM, and our continued efforts and relationships with the Barkindji–Maraura Elders are testament to our ongoing success in our journey to reconciliation.

Our First Nations Employee Network

The MDBA supports an employee network specifically for the purpose of creating a supportive environment for First Nations employees to enable them to build relationships through support, guidance, mentoring, and connection. Originally established as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employee Network (ATSIEN) in 2016, the First Nations Employee Network continues to provide a safe outlet for the thoughts and aspirations of First Nations employees to be aired and acknowledged, and the other network members as a supportive group to provide advice and guidance on a variety of issues.



With our recent, and future, efforts in affirmative measures recruitment we anticipate the network will grow and strengthen, become a robust avenue of support for First Nations employees.

Our network has made meaningful contributions to our day-to-day work by providing cultural advice on policies and programs to support our reconciliation agenda and helping our Strengthening Connections Employment Network deliver on the initiatives set out in our MDBA Innovate RAP 2019–21. It is anticipated that the newly created network will continue this legacy of cooperation and assist with our Stretch RAP 2024–27.

In addition to supporting First Nations employees, the network advances the MDBA's efforts to create a culturally safe and welcoming workplace for all employees. It also advises on appropriate cultural learnings that can be brought into the workplace such as Country and Culture sessions, Question and Answers sessions and book clubs. Their close cooperation with the Strengthening Connections Employee Network is invaluable to the MDBA's continued efforts to embed Reconciliation into its daily business.

Closing the Gap

This RAP sets out our commitment to the objectives of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. Many of our deliverables will directly impact on Closing the Gap priority reforms, including:

- Establish and/or maintain a minimum of 3 formal partnerships with First Nations communities or organisations (priority reform 1 – formal partnerships and shared decision-making)
- Ensure First Nations Employee Network members are consulted on all policies and procedures relating to First Nations matters (priority reform 1 – formal partnerships and shared decision-making)
- Partner with a First Nations business, to develop a set of corporate templates for use for internal and external reports, presentations and communications (priority reform 2 – building the community-controlled sector)
- Provide ongoing education opportunities for senior leaders and managers on the effects of racism and unconscious bias (priority reform 3 – transforming government organisations)
- Develop and implement, Cultural Learning Plan for our staff, in consultation with First Nations peoples (priority reform 3 – transforming government organisations)
- Formally engage with the First Nations Employee Network and advisors to improve our Managing Unacceptable Behaviour – Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination Policy (priority reform 3 – transforming government organisations)
- Publish an annual traffic light report against our RAP commitments, outlining achievements, challenges and learnings (Priority reform 4 - Shared access to data and information at a regional level)

We will continue to investigate and identify additional opportunities to contribute to Closing the Gap.



Our Stretch priorities

1. **Recruit and Retain:** Increase our employment opportunities by focusing on affirmative measures recruitment programs for all APS levels and ensure a safe working environment to retain current and future First Nations employees.
2. **Partnerships:** Partner with First Nations peoples and businesses to grow working relationships and procurement opportunities.
3. **Governance:** Ensure strong and effective governance to ensure successful delivery on our Reconciliation Action Plan.
4. **Protect and Preserve:** Develop an Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property Policy and supporting documents in consultation with First Nations people and organisations to ensure the protection of First Nations peoples traditional arts and culture.
5. **Celebrate and Participate:** encourage staff engagement in significant events such as NAIDOC Week and NRW, removing all barriers for staff participation.
6. **Promote:** Actively promote reconciliation with our internal and external stakeholders to demonstrate our commitment and leadership to reconciliation.
7. **Policies and Procedures:** ensure our policies, processes, procedures and strategies are regularly reviewed in consultation with First Nations employees, with a cultural equality lens, to ensure best practice.
8. **Cultural learning:** Promote our cultural learning opportunities to staff, have numerous accessibility options, for example face to face, face to screen, and ensure staff completion of these courses.
9. **Embed First Nations matters into our daily work:** embed reconciliation so it becomes business as usual for the organisation by implementing actions into each Division plan.
10. **Embed First Nations knowledge into water management:** We are investing in, and, respectfully and with consent, will combine First Nations and Western sciences and knowledges, working in partnership with First Nations peoples.



Action Area: Relationships


Building strong relationships between First Nations peoples of the Murray–Darling Basin, we will broaden understanding and awareness of cultural matters across the organisation and enhance our First Nations knowledge and management of water across the Basin.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Action: Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with First Nations peoples and organisations		
Meet with local First Nations groups and organisations to continuously improve guiding principles for engagement	Review May 2025, 2026, 2027	General Manager, First Nations
Review, update and implement an engagement plan to work with First Nations peoples and continue to work with First Nations peoples and organisations, including engagement when developing new projects or programs led by the MDBA	Review June 2025, 2026, 2027	General Manager, First Nations General Manager, ePMO and Governance
Establish and/or maintain a minimum of 3 formal partnerships with First Nations communities or organisations including Murray Lower Darling Rivers Indigenous Nations (MLDRIN), the Living Murray Program Indigenous Partnerships Program (IPP) and Lake Victoria Registered Aboriginal Party Consultative Committee	Review July 2025, 2026, 2027	General Manager, First Nations Director, Environmental Water Coordination program Director, Riparian and Environmental Assets
Develop an Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property Policy and supporting documents in consultation with First Nations peoples	October 2024	General Manager, First Nations

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
		General Counsel
Ensure First Nations Employee Network are consulted on all policies and procedures relating to First Nations matters, including the MDBA Cultural Protocols and Style Guide, and Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.	Review August 2025, 2026, 2027	Indigenous Champion
Partner with a First Nations business, to develop a set of corporate templates for use for internal and external reports, presentations and communications	October 2024	General Manager, First Nations
Action: Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW)		
Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to all staff	May 2025, 2026, 2027	People and Culture Lead Indigenous Champion
RAP Committee members will participate in at least 2 external NRW events each year	27 May – 3 June 2025, 2026, 2027	Indigenous Champion
Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in 2 external events to recognise and celebrate NRW	27 May – 3 June 2025, 2026, 2027	People and Culture Lead Indigenous Champion Chief Executive

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Organise and promote a minimum of 4 internal NRW events, including at least 1 organisation wide NRW event, each year and offering attendance at events to other agencies as appropriate, ensuring staff understand attendance is supported on paid work time, encouraging staff attendance	27 May – 3 June 2025, 2026, 2027	Chair, Strengthening Connections Employee Network Chief Executive
Register all our NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's NRW website	May 2025, 2026, 2027	People and Culture Lead
Continue to provide First Nations staff with access to cultural leave that can be used to observe NRW	May 2025, 2026, 2027	People and Culture Team People and Culture Lead
Action: Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence		
Develop and implement a staff engagement strategy to raise awareness of reconciliation across our workforce	September 2024	People and Culture Team People and Culture Lead
Develop, implement and review a RAP communications strategy to communicate our RAP to all internal and external stakeholders	September 2024	People and Culture Lead Communications
Develop and implement strategies to positively influence our external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes	July 2025	Indigenous Champion Chair, Strengthening Connections Employee Network
Collaborate with minimum 2 RAP and other like-minded organisations to implement innovative approaches to advance reconciliation, including Department Industry Science and Resources (DISR) and Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW)	September 2025	Indigenous Champion

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Work with Reconciliation Australia to inform the viability of forming a cross-agency Reconciliation Industry Network Group (RING)	November 2025	People and Culture Lead
The Chief Executive will promote the MDBA's dedication and commitment to reconciliation throughout the calendar year	Review July 2025, 2026, 2027	Chief Executive General Manager, First Nations
Ensure a representative from MDBA attends at least 2 RAP Leadership Gatherings annually	Review 2025, 2026, 2027	Indigenous Champion
Publish our RAP on our website and intranet. Promote internal tools to communicate our RAP initiatives and outcome to all staff and our stakeholders	September 2024	Communications Team Communications Lead
Action: Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies		
Continuously improve HR policies and procedures concerned with anti-discrimination	Ongoing (Review July 2025, 2026, 2027)	People and Culture Team People and Culture Lead
Engage with First Nations staff and/or First Nations advisors to continuously improve our anti-discrimination policy	Ongoing (Review July 2025, 2026, 2027)	Chief People Officer
Develop, implement, and communicate an anti-discrimination policy for our organisation	October 2024	People and Culture Team People and Culture Lead
Provide ongoing education to senior leaders and managers on the effects of racism	Ongoing (Review July 2025, 2026, 2027)	Chief Executive People and Culture Lead Indigenous Champion



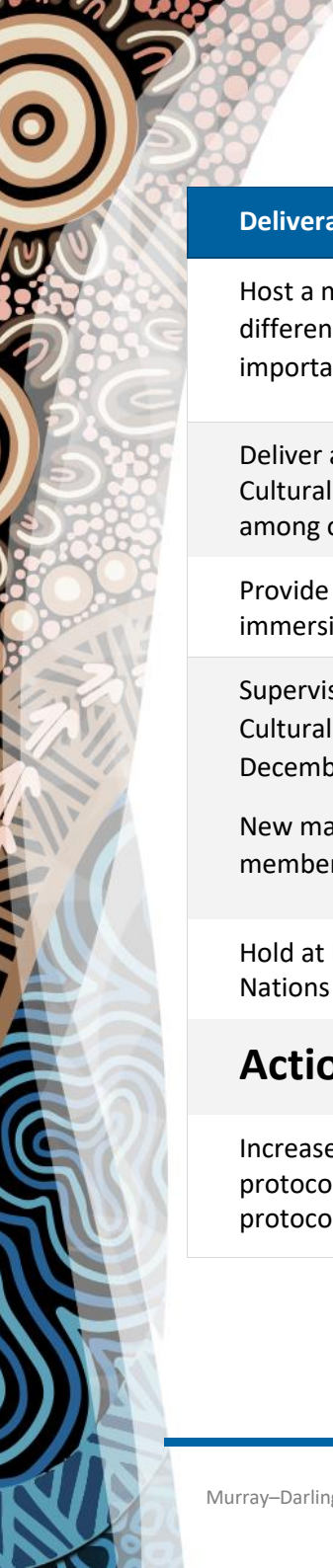
Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Senior leaders to publicly support anti-discrimination campaigns, initiatives, and stances against racism	Ongoing (Review March 2025, 2026, 2027)	Chief Executive
Review MDBA APS Employee Census results on discrimination in the workplace and implement appropriate actions for the agency if required	August 2025, 2026, 2027	Chief People Officer



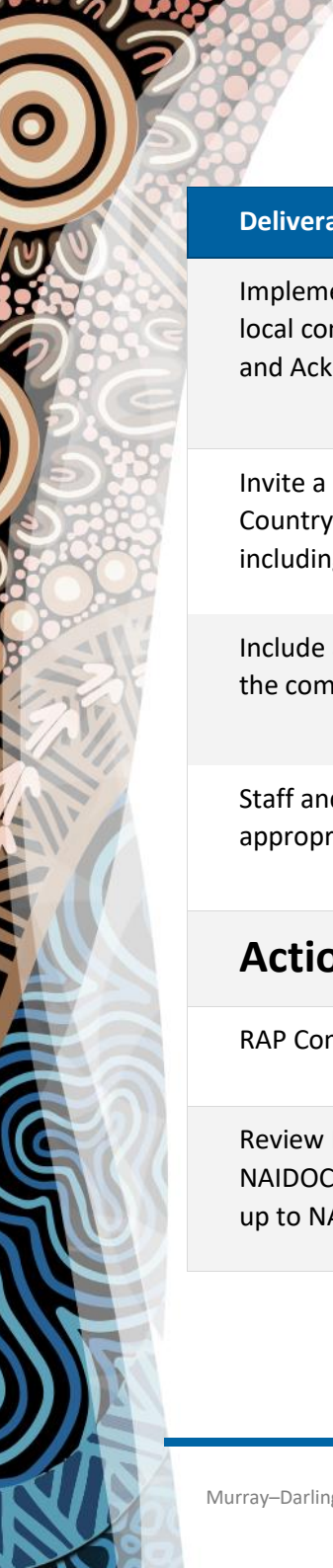
Action Area: Respect

At the MDBA we are mindful of observing cultural sensitivity in the delivery of our water operations and interactions with First Nations peoples. We highly value the trust and confidence that First Nations peoples show to MDBA. We admire and respect the cultural perspectives and knowledge of First Nations peoples. We seek to gain a deeper understanding of the matters that relate to our work together. This will help us on our journey to provide culturally safe river environments and enhance and improve river management.

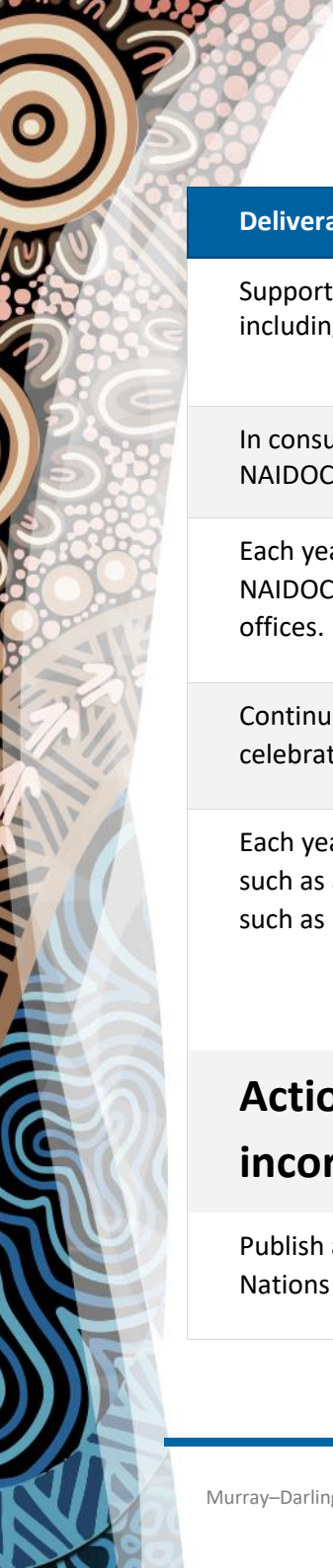
Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Action: Increase understanding, value and recognition of First Nations cultures, histories, knowledge, and rights through cultural learning		
Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation	Review June 2025, 2026, 2027	Chief People Officer
Implement and communicate a cultural learning strategy for our staff	September 2024	People and Culture Team People and Culture Lead
Commit all RAP Working Group members, HR managers, senior executive group and all new staff to undertake formal and structured cultural learning	November 2024	People and Culture Lead
85% of all staff to undertake formal and structured cultural learning, in the form of online and face-to-face learning to maintain cultural competency	Reported on May 2025, 2026, 2027	Chief People Officer
Support and encourage First Nations employees, and the wider organisation, to attend culturally significant events outside of NRW and NAIDOC week including First Nations community and cultural festivals to support cultural learning	Review July 2025, 2026, 2027	Chief Executive Indigenous Champion




Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Host a minimum 2 seminars per year from First Nations' presenters to discuss different aspect of Country, promote cultural awareness and celebrate important cultural dates	Review July 2025, 2026, 2027	Indigenous Champion People and Culture Lead
Deliver a minimum 4 programmed events and activities, such as On-Country Cultural tours (in different regions) to promote continued cultural learning among our staff	Review July 2025, 2026, 2027	Indigenous Champion People and Culture Lead
Provide opportunities for SES and Executive Level staff to participate in immersive Cultural Development programs	April 2025, 2026, 2027	Chief People Officer
Supervisors of First Nations staff to complete online and/or face to face Cultural Competency training. All current supervisors to complete training by December 2024	December 2024, 2025, 2026	Chief People Officer
New managers to complete training within one month of a First Nations staff member joining the team	Ongoing	
Hold at least 1 Authority meeting each year on country with a focus on First Nations opportunities, issues and engagement	March 2025, 2026, 2027	Chief Executive
Action: Demonstrate respect to First Nations peoples by observing cultural protocols.		
Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols	Review July 2025	General Manager, First Nations



Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Implement and communicate a cultural protocol document (tailored for all local communities we operate in), including protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country	October 2024	People and Culture Team People and Culture Lead Communications
Invite a local Traditional Owner or Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at agency wide events including all staff face to face meetings	April 2025, 2026, 2027	Indigenous Champion
Include an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at the commencement of meetings	Ongoing (Review April 2025, 2026, 2027)	Indigenous Champion Chief Executive
Staff and senior leaders provide an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at all external MDBA events	Ongoing (Review April 2025, 2026, 2027)	Indigenous Champion Chief Executive
Action: Engage with First Nations cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.		
RAP Committee to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event	First week in July 2025, 2026, 2027	RAP Committee
Review HR policies and procedures to remove barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week. Promote the option for staff to use cultural leave in the lead up to NAIDOC Week	April 2025, 2026, 2027	People and Culture Lead



Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Support all staff to participate in 2 NAIDOC Week events in our local area, including regional offices	First week in July 2025, 2026, 2027	Indigenous Champion
In consultation with First Nations stakeholders, support minimum 2 external NAIDOC Week events each year, including our regional offices	First week in July 2025, 2026, 2027	Indigenous Champion
Each year we will develop and promote a calendar of events celebrating NAIDOC week, First Nations peoples' history and culture across all MDBA offices.	May 2025, 2026, 2027	RAP Committee
Continue providing First Nations staff with cultural leave that can be used to celebrate NAIDOC week	June 2025, 2026, 2027	People and Culture Team People and Culture Lead
Each year we will continue to support First Nations people within the Basin, such as a nominated school, through fundraising and donations during events such as NAIDOC Week and NRW	July 2025, 2026, 2027	Indigenous Champion Chair, Strengthening Connections Employee Network FNEN (First Nations Employee Network) Ambassador
Action: Collaborate with First Nations people and communities to understand and incorporate First Nations issues in core MDBA activities		
Publish a revised Basin Environmental Watering Strategy that includes First Nations objectives and outcomes for shared benefits in environmental water	December 2024	General Manager Applied Science



Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<p>As part of the Murray–Darling Basin Sustainable Rivers Audit (SRA):</p> <p>Establish and support a First Nations leadership group for the SRA</p> <p>Develop, research and publish a suite of cultural products for example a chapter on cultural indicators developed in consultation with First Nations organisations as co-authors of the relevant chapter</p>	December 2025	General Manager Applied Science
Collaborate with Traditional Owners and the Registered Aboriginal Party consultative committee at Lake Victoria to prepare a field guide to cultural heritage to assist with knowledge transfer	June 2025	Director Riparian and Environmental Assets
Deliver a report on First Nations People participation in environmental watering (Section 85E report on consideration of Indigenous values and uses in environmental watering)	May 2025	General Manager, First Nations Director, Evaluation
Provide support for First Nations organisations such as the Murray Lower Darling Indigenous Nations, including provision of financial support	July 2025, 2026, 2027	General Manager, First Nations
Fund a Cultural Flows Officer position to progress the National Cultural Flows Research project working with First Nations and publishing final cultural flows report	June 2025	General Manager, First Nations



Action Area: Opportunities

We will find new ways to enhance First Nations staff professional development and improve ongoing employment options. We will improve how we value and seek First Nations' knowledge in our business. We will improve social outcomes for First Nations peoples by increasing engagement with businesses that are recognized as employing and/or run by First Nations peoples. Through the delivery of these commitments the MDBA hope to become an employer of choice for First Nations people. By providing opportunities for First Nations people the MDBA will strengthen our relationships with communities and organisations as well as better incorporate First Nations values into our business.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Action: Improve employment outcomes by increasing First Nations recruitment, retention and professional development		
Engage with First Nations staff to consult on the effectiveness of our recruitment, retention and professional development strategy	November 2024	Chief People Officer
Implement the recruitment, retention and professional development strategy	December 2024	Chief People Officer
Advertise employment vacancies to effectively reach First Nations stakeholders	Ongoing (Review August 2025, 2026, 2027)	Chief People Officer
Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to remove barriers to First Nations participation in our workplace	May 2025, 2026, 2027	Chief People Officer
First Nations employees to be supported to take on management and senior level positions	Ongoing (Review October 2024, 2025, 2026)	Chief People Officer

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Achieve 2% First Nations representation at each of the following classifications groups APS 1–6, EL 1–2 and 1 % SES. We will do this by increasing the number of affirmative measures recruitment activities and identified positions in each division	December 2025	Chief People Officer
Continue to partner with portfolio agencies for MDBA staff to also participate in First Nations Networks	November 2024, 2025, 2026	Indigenous Champion Chief People Officer
Report annually to MDBA Executive Board on First Nations employment and retention	December 2024, 2025, 2026	Chief People Officer
Conduct at least one agency First Nations recruitment round	December 2025	Chief People Officer
Conduct an affirmative measures recruitment process for at least one Senior Executive Service position in the agency	December 2025	Chief People Officer
Develop guidance to help business areas conduct affirmative measures recruitment. This will include advertising strategies, selection panel requirements and team cultural competency requirements	December 2024	Chief People Officer
Action: Increase First Nations supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes		
Review and maintain an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement strategy	Review September 2024, 2025, 2026	General Manager, Legal, Procurement and Government Relations



Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Continue our membership with Supply Nation	Review September 2024, 2025, 2026	General Manager, Legal, Procurement and Government Relations
Develop and communicate opportunities for procurement of goods and services from First Nations businesses to staff	October 2024	General Manager, Legal, Procurement and Government Relations
Review and update procurement practices to remove barriers to procuring goods and services from First Nations businesses	May 2025	General Manager, Legal, Procurement and Government Relations
Maintain commercial relationships with 3 First Nations businesses	Review and report annually to Executive October 2024, 2025, 2026	General Manager, Legal, Procurement and Government Relations
Increase the number of eligible procurements that are awarded to First Nations enterprises to 2.25% by the end of the RAP reporting period	August 2025, 2026	General Manager, Legal, Procurement and Government Relations
Train all relevant staff in contracting First Nations businesses through Supply Nation or an equivalent organisation	May 2025	General Manager, Legal, Procurement and Government Relations



Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Action: Drive reconciliation across the Basin by valuing and seeking First Nations' knowledge in the management of rivers and water		
<p>Increase the MDBA's role in valuing First Nations cultural authority and understanding the river and water management.</p> <p>Leverage the expertise of First Nations' members of partner organisations. Communicate these initiatives externally for further improvement and for other agencies and organisations to learn from. Including, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• At least 1 First Nations Authority member and representation on other high-level committees e.g. Basin Consultation Community and Southern Connected Basin Environmental Watering Committee (SCBEWC)• Integration and co-design of First Nations values into MDBA project e.g., Indigenous Partnerships Program (IPP) under The Living Murray Initiative	<p>Review and report annually to Executive (Review November 2024, 2025, 2026)</p>	<p>Indigenous Champion</p> <p>All Executives General Manager, First Nations</p>

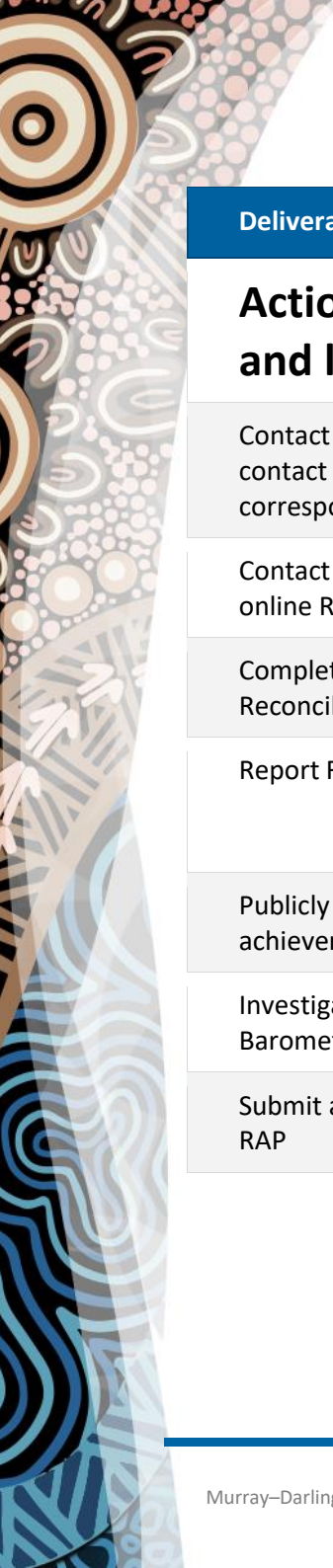


Action Area: Governance

Maintaining strong governance enables us to ensure the work of the MDBA has the structures and processes to progress reconciliation across the agency. Our governance will be based on strong leadership and accountability for achieving the RAP's actions.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Action: Establish and maintain an effective RAP Committee to govern the RAP		
Maintain First Nations representation on the RAP Committee	December 2025	Indigenous Champion
Review and update terms of reference for the RAP committee and Strengthening Connections Employee Network that set out meeting frequency, roles and responsibilities	October 2024	People and Culture Lead
Meet at least 4 times per year to drive and monitor RAP implementation	February, May, August and November 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027	Indigenous Champion RAP Committee
Action: Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments		
Embed resource needs for RAP implementation	October 2024, 2025, 2026	Chief Finance Officer
Embed key RAP actions in performance expectations of senior management and all staff	July 2025, 2026, 2027	Chief Executive
Embed appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments	November 2024	Chief People Officer

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Maintain an internal RAP Champion from senior management	December 2026	Indigenous Champion Chief People Officer
Include our RAP as a standing agenda item at senior management meetings	Ongoing (Review June 2025, 2026, 2027)	Indigenous Champion Chief People Officer
Maintain an internal working group (the First Nations Project Working Group) to manage internal coordination of First Nations activities	Quarterly March, June, August, November 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027	People and Culture Lead Chair, Strengthening Connections Employee Network
Action: Embed reconciliation by developing and implementing actions in the division action plans		
Each division will include actions for reconciliation in their division action plan that sets out their key priorities for reconciliation	October 2024	Executive Directors
Continue to have a dedicated Indigenous Champion at the SES Level	February 2025, 2026, 2027	Chief Executive
Ensure a minimum of 2 senior executive staff are actively involved in the Strengthening Connections Employee Network	December 2024, 2025, 2026	Indigenous Champion
Continue to embed Strengthening Connections Employee Network representation from staff across each division and regional offices	October 2024, 2025, 2026	Executive Chair, Strengthening Connections Employee Network



Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Action: Build accountability and transparency by reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings internally and externally		
Contact Reconciliation Australia to verify that our primary and secondary contact details are up to date, to ensure we do not miss out on important RAP correspondence	June 2025, 2026, 2027	People and Culture Lead
Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire	1 August 2024, 2025, 2026	People and Culture Lead
Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia	30 September 2024, 2025, 2026	People and Culture Lead
Report RAP progress to all staff and senior leaders quarterly	Quarterly March, June, August, November 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027	Indigenous Champion
Publicly report against our RAP commitments annually, outlining achievements, challenges and learnings	December 2024, 2025, 2026	Indigenous Champion
Investigate participating in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Barometer	August 2024	People and Culture Lead
Submit a traffic light report to Reconciliation Australia at the conclusion of this RAP	August 2027	People and Culture Lead



Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Action: Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP		
Register via Reconciliation Australia’s website to begin developing our next RAP	February 2027	Chief People Officer



Download a copy of the RAP

www.mdba.gov.au/RAP

Contact us

MDBA People and Culture

Peopleandculture@mdba.gov.au



Australian Government



**Murray-
Darling
Basin
Authority**

Artwork by Amy Kilby, artist from Wiradjuri county.

Office locations – First Nations Country

Adelaide – Kurna Country

Canberra – Ngunnawal Country

Goondiwindi – Bigambul Country

Griffith – Wiradjuri Country

Mildura – Latji Latji Country

Murray Bridge – Ngarrindjeri Country

Wodonga – Dhudhuroa Country



mdba.gov.au



1800 630 114



engagement@mdba.gov.au